GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:113
ANSWERED ON:31.07.2000
DEATH OF TIGERS
BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB;SHYAMA SINGH

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether many tigers and birds of rare species have died recently in the Nandankanan Zoological Park in Bhubaneshwar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total number of Tigers/birds died in the said park during the last one year;

(d) whether any preliminary investigation into the matter has been conducted;

(e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken against the guilty officers;

(f) whether any guidelines have been issued/proposed to be issued to States to save these wild animals in captivity in future;
(g) if so, the details thereof; and
(h) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to preserve the rare wild animals/birds in the Zoological Park and to avoid the recurrence of such incidents in future?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a),(b),(c),d),(e),(f),(g)&(h) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a),(b),(c),(d),(e),(f),(g) AND (h) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUES` NO.113 BY SHRIMATI SHYAMA SINGH: SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB REGARDING DEATH OF TIGERS FIXED FOR REPLY ON 31.7.2000.

One normal coloured Tiger died in Nandankanan Zoo on 23rd June, 2000. The postmortem reports confirmed that the animal died because of Trypanosomiasis. Another tiger showed symptoms of same sickness on 2nd July, 2000. Therefore, the zoo authorities administered `Berenil` to 16 tigers of adjoining enclosures, after taking them into a squeezed cage. The animal which showed sign of sickness on 2nd July died on 4th July. Of the remaining 15 tigers which were administered drug on 3rd July, 8 tigers (six white and two coloured) died between 4th and 5th July, 2000. One white tiger each died on 6th and 7th July, 2000 respectively. It has also been revealed that 5 tigers got infection of the same disease in 1999 of which 3 died. One of the survivors of 1999 was amongst the 12 tigers that died between 23rd June to 7th July 2000. During the year 1999-2000, five Horn Bills died in Nandankanan zoo, along with other common birds
During the last one-year (from January 1999 to December, 1999) a total of 11 tigers of which six were cubs died in Nandankanan Zoological Park. Deaths of 108 birds has also taken place in the same zoo during the last one year (from January 1999 to December 1999). This includes death of 61 birds because of super cyclone.

The Central Government was informed of the recent deaths of tigers on the morning of 5th July, 2000. The Ministry appointed an Expert Committee on the request of the State Government to find out the causes of death and to suggest ways and means to prevent recurrence of such happenings. The Committee was asked to start its work from 7th July and to give its report by 15th July, 2000. In the interim period the Ministry decided to have an expert consultation to discuss the events at Nandankanan Zoo on 19th and 20th July, 2000. Union Ministry of Environment and Forests officers took a meeting with Chief Secretary, Govt. of Orissa, Secretary to Chief Minister, Govt. of Orissa, Principal Secretary (Forests) and the Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Govt. of Orissa on 21st July 2000.

The reasons which may have led to flare up of the disease ranged from over crowding of animals in the enclosures, ingress of livestock into the zoo because of breaches in the boundary wall, non-repair of fencing of white tiger safari that was damaged by the cyclone, unhygienic method of feeding, poor drainage and increased vector loads due to bushes and shrubs in the vicinity of the enclosures.

The Ministry is of the view that the response of zoo administration was inadequate to meet the situation. Zoo authorities failed to take appropriate mitigative measures after the death of 3 tigers during 1999 from the same disease and again after the death of first tiger on 23rd June, 2000. No action was taken during this period for determining the parasitic loads in the blood of the tigers and providing prophylactic treatment to the animals between 23rd June to 2nd July, 2000. These views have been communicated to the State Government as also the need to take necessary disciplinary action against those responsible for the lapse.

Under recognition of Zoo Rules, 1992, Government of India has issued standing guidelines for maintenance of minimum standards for upkeep, healthcare, hygiene, feeding and sanitation etc for the Zoos in the country .

In consultation with the State Government a detailed plan of action toprevent reoccurrences has been worked out and the Ministry is closely monitoring the implementation of the action plan by the State Government.

Safety measures proposed to check the recurrence of such incidence are as follows:-

a. Upgradation of animal housing and health care facilities:

Determination of parasitic load in all the larger carnivores and to provide prophylactic doses as required.
Action to repair the boundary wall and fencing of safari to be taken on priority basis.
Providing individual feed cell to each tiger and also to provide individual squeezed cages for periodic checking and routine treatment.
Moats of the enclosures to be kept dry.
Water pools with potable water in each enclosure feeding cell.

b. Prevention of disease:-

Immunization of all the livestock within the 5 km from the zoo .
Antemortem and postmortem of all the animals slaughtered for the purpose of supply of meat to the zoo animals
Regular quality check of the meat by zoo veterinarian.
Supply of meat to animals in hygienic and close containers.
The Zoo to keep requisite stock of life saving drugs and replenish it regularly.

c. Administrative and financial matters:
State Government to allow direct flow of funds from Central Zoo Authority to Zoo Administration.
A whole time Zoo Director for the zoo.
Trained veterinarians to be posted in Zoo for a minimum period of 5 years.

d. General

State Government shall form a management committee to supervise the functioning of zoo and will meet at least once a quarter.
Central Zoo Authority would constitute a team of experts who shall visit the zoo on a periodic basis to assess the action taken by the State Government. The team will also examine the post mortem reports of all the large cats who have died in the intervening period.
The zoo shall maintain a visitors register at appropriate site where the people interested in zoo management can make suggestions which would be given due consideration by the management committee.